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THE FEDERAL SPOTLIGHT

Growing 'Paperwork Jungle' Hit By House Unit as Boosting Costs

By JOSEPH YOUNG

Star Staff Writer

A House committee has criticized sharply what it calls the "Federal Paperwork Jungle."

The mountain of Government paperwork is raising Federal costs considerably and inflating Government employment and salaries, it was charged by the House Civil Service Subcommittee on Census and Statistics.

Representative Olsen, Democrat of Montana, chairman of the group, sardonically commented that when President Johnson told Congress in his state-of-the-Union message that we don't intend to be buried by anyone he should have "included the Federal agencies and their paperwork."

Mr. Olsen said his subcommittee's investigation showed that excessive Federal paperwork was being used to push empire-building and overstaffing in Government.

Otherwise well-meaning Government officials "seem intent on nurturing" a greater amount of paperwork in their agencies, Mr. Olsen said.

He cited as an example the 500 million forms a year which the Internal Revenue Service and Social Security Administration now process in operating the new taxpayer numbering system.

The irony of it, according to Mr. Olsen, is that electronic computers in this case are helping to create more paperwork when ordinarily they should be used to reduce the paperwork flow.

The Montanan said the excessive Government paperwork is often too onerous for the small businessman who doesn't have enough employees or bookkeepers to handle the reporting requirements of Government agencies. This paperwork often means the difference between a

profit and a loss to these small companies, he said.

Mr. Olsen indorsed President Johnson's recent request to cabinet officers and agency heads to eliminate excessive paperwork because it breeds overstaffing.

A good place to start is the Internal Revenue Service, he added.

Mr. Olsen said the Government's record is not all bad in this regard. He cited the excellent record of the Interstate Commerce Commission which last year reduced its paperwork requirements of regulated carriers by a half-million reports. Mr. Olsen also commended some of the systems work of the Treasury Department and the Bureau of Old-Age Survivors Insurance, which provides for the transmittal of records via computer tape and thereby makes a substantial reduction in paperwork.

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